



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Office of the Commissioner

Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Employer



Education Committee Public Hearing

March 8, 2023

HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food For School Incentive Program and Expansion of the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program

Good morning, Chairmen Currey and McCrory, Vice Chairs Leeper and Winfield, Ranking Members McCarty and Berthel, and honorable members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for School Incentive Program and Expansion of the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program. My name is Bryan Hurlburt, and I am the Commissioner of Agriculture.

The Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids (CTG4CTK) Grant Program was established using one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding of \$250,000 in FY 22 and \$500,00 in FY23. Through a combination of financial and technical assistance, this grant program helps to develop farm to school programs to (1) increase the availability of local foods in child nutrition programs, (2) allow educators to use hands-on educational techniques to teach students about nutrition and farm-to-school connections, (3) build relationships with local farmers and producers, (4) enrich the educational experience of students, and (5) improve the health outcomes of children in the state while enhancing the state's economy.

DoAg received 59 complete applications for the first round of funding, totaling \$962,425 in requested funds. Of those, 14 proposals were funded, 11 of those were from Alliance Districts or an Early Childhood Center that was a School Readiness Provider. Grant awardees are provided in separate table.

The FY 23 CT Grown for CT Kids Grant closed for applications in December and included a new category of microgrants for projects requesting \$5,000 or less. This round had 72 applications, with requested funds totaling \$1,022,284. Of those, we were able to fund 32 projects across the state. Grant awardees are provided in separate table.

The types of projects the Department has seen through the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant include school gardens, nutrition education, partnerships with local farmers and producers, and farm to school action plans. This grant program has worked to strengthen the connection between our schools and our agricultural community by increasing access to local and fresh produce to our students.



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information on this program. If there are any additional questions or follow-ups, please contact DoAg's Legislative Director, Kayleigh Royston at Kayleigh.Royston@ct.gov.